

Amendments to the Claims

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions of the claims and all prior listings of the claims in the present application.

1-37. (canceled)

38. (new) A pair of pneumatic tires for a motorcycle, comprising:

a front tire; and

a rear tire;

wherein each tire comprises a tread band provided with a plurality of grooves,

wherein the tread band of the front tire comprises:

at least one circumferential groove; and

a plurality of transverse grooves;

wherein the at least one circumferential groove extends at an equatorial plane of the front tire within a central zone of the tread band of the front tire,

wherein the central zone of the tread band of the front tire extends astride the equatorial plane of the front tire,

wherein the transverse grooves comprise axially inner ends lying within the central zone of the tread band of the front tire,

wherein the transverse grooves alternately extend from the central zone of the tread band of the front tire toward axially opposite shoulder zones of the tread band of the front tire,

wherein the axially opposite shoulder zones of the tread band of the front tire are axial external to the central zone of the tread band of the front tire,

wherein at least some of the transverse grooves are connected to the at least one circumferential groove,

wherein the tread band of the rear tire comprises:

an area defining a substantially null sea/land ratio within a central zone of the tread band of the rear tire;

wherein the central zone of the tread band of the rear tire extends astride an equatorial plane of the rear tire, and

wherein the central zone of the tread band of the rear tire has a width greater than or equal to about 5% and less than or equal to about 30% of an axial development of the tread band of the rear tire.

39. (new) The pair of tires of claim 38, the central zone of the tread band of the front tire has a width greater than or equal to about 10% and less than or equal to about 35% of an axial development of the tread band of the front tire.

40. (new) The pair of tires of claim 38, wherein the central zone of the tread band of the front tire has a sea/land ratio greater than or equal to about 15% and less than or equal to about 30%.

41. (new) The pair of tires of claim 38, wherein the tread band of the front tire further comprises:

axially opposite intermediate side zones lying between the central zone and the shoulder zones;

wherein each of the intermediate side zones has a width greater than or equal to about 15% and less than or equal to about 35% of an axial development of the tread band of the front tire, and

wherein each of the intermediate side zones has a sea/land ratio greater than or equal to about 15% and less than or equal to about 35%.

42. (new) The pair of tires of claim 38, wherein the transverse grooves in the tread band of the front tire are substantially curvilinear.

43. (new) The pair of tires of claim 38, wherein the transverse grooves in the tread band of the front tire define, with a running direction of the front tire, a first angle greater than or equal to about 30° and less than or equal to about 60°.

44. (new) The pair of tires of claim 42, wherein the transverse grooves in the tread band of the front tire have a radius of curvature greater than or equal to about 40 mm and less than or equal to about 200 mm as measured from a curvature center positioned along a circumferential line bisecting each half portion of the tread band defined by the equatorial plane of the front tire.

45. (new) The pair of tires of claim 38, wherein the transverse grooves in the tread band of the front tire are circumferentially distributed along the tread band in axially opposite groups comprising at least two transverse grooves.

46. (new) The pair of tires of claim 45, wherein the axially opposite groups of transverse grooves are circumferentially staggered.

47. (new) The pair of tires of claim 46, wherein the tread band of the front tire further comprises:

at least one transverse groove in the tread band of the front tire on either side of the equatorial plane of the front tire between the axially opposite and circumferentially staggered groups of transverse grooves.

48. (new) The pair of tires of claim 38, wherein the transverse grooves in the tread band of the front tire are substantially parallel to one another.

49. (new) The pair of tires of claim 38, wherein the at least one circumferential groove in the tread band of the front tire axially crosses the equatorial plane of the front tire in a substantially winding fashion.

50. (new) The pair of tires of claim 49, wherein the at least one circumferential groove comprises a plurality of curvilinear segments having respective circumferentially staggered centers of curvature positioned at opposite sides of the equatorial plane of the front tire.

51. (new) The pair of tires of claim 50, wherein the curvilinear segments have a radius of curvature greater than or equal to about 40 mm and less than or equal to about 300 mm.

52. (new) The pair of tires of claim 38, wherein the rear tire has a curvature ratio lower than the front tire.

53. (new) The pair of tires of claim 38, wherein the tread band of the rear tire further comprises:

a plurality of transverse grooves alternately extending from the central zone of the tread band of the rear tire toward axially opposite shoulder zones of the tread band of the rear tire;

wherein the axially opposite shoulder zones of the tread band of the rear tire are axial external to the central zone of the tread band of the rear tire.

54. (new) The pair of tires of claim 53, wherein the tread band of the rear tire further comprises:

axially opposite intermediate side zones lying between the central zone and the shoulder zones,

wherein each of the intermediate side zones has a width greater than or equal to about 15% and less than or equal to about 35% of an axial development of the tread band of the rear tire, and

wherein each of the intermediate side zones has a sea/land ratio greater than or equal to about 10% and less than or equal to about 30%.

55. (new) The pair of tires of claim 53, wherein the transverse grooves in the tread band of the rear tire are substantially curvilinear.

56. (new) The pair of tires of claim 53, wherein the transverse grooves in the tread band of the rear tire define, with a running direction of the rear tire, a second angle greater than or equal to about 30° and less than or equal to about 60°.

57. (new) The pair of tires of claim 53, wherein the transverse grooves in the tread band of the rear tire have a radius of curvature greater than or equal to about 60 mm and less than or equal to about 240 mm as measured from a curvature center positioned along a circumferential line bisecting each half portion of the tread band defined by the equatorial plane of the rear tire.

58. (new) The pair of tires of claim 53, wherein the transverse grooves in the tread band of the rear tire are circumferentially distributed along the tread band of the rear tire in axially opposite groups comprising at least two transverse grooves.

59. (new) The pair of tires of claim 58, wherein the axially opposite groups of transverse grooves are circumferentially staggered.

60. (new) The pair of tires of claim 59, wherein the tread band of the rear tire further comprises:

at least one transverse groove in the tread band of the rear tire on either side of the equatorial plane of the rear tire between the axially opposite and circumferentially staggered groups of transverse grooves.

61. (new) The pair of tires of claim 53, wherein the transverse grooves in the tread band of the rear tire are substantially parallel to one another.

62. (new) The pair of tires of claim 53, wherein at least some of the transverse grooves in the tread band of the rear tire are circumferentially interconnected by bridging grooves.

63. (new) The pair of tires of claim 53, wherein at least some of the transverse grooves in the tread band of the rear tire are provided with a tapered end portion having a width progressively decreasing toward the equatorial plane of the rear tire.

64. (new) A motorcycle with the pair of tires of claim 38 mounted on respective front and rear wheels of the motorcycle.

65. (new) A method of improving performance on both wet and dry ground of a motorcycle, the motorcycle comprising a pair of pneumatic tires mounted on respective front and rear wheels of the motorcycle;

the pair of tires comprising:

a front tire; and

a rear tire;

wherein each tire comprises a tread band provided with a plurality of grooves,

the method comprising:

enhancing water-draining capacity of the front tire under a ground contacting area

within a central zone of the tread band of the front tire; and

enhancing traction capacity of the rear tire by providing a substantially null

sea/land ratio within a central zone of the tread band of the rear tire;

wherein the central zone of the tread band of the front tire extends astride an equatorial plane of the front tire, and

wherein the central zone of the tread band of the rear tire extends astride an equatorial plane of the rear tire.

66. (new) The method of claim 65, wherein enhancing water-draining capacity of the front tire comprises:

providing the tread band of the front tire with a plurality of transverse grooves;

wherein the transverse grooves comprise axially inner ends lying within the central zone of the tread band of the front tire,

wherein the transverse grooves alternately extend from the central zone of the tread band of the front tire toward axially opposite shoulder zones of the tread band of the front tire, and

wherein the axially opposite shoulder zones of the tread band of the front tire are axial external to the central zone of the tread band of the front tire.

67. (new) The method of claim 65, wherein enhancing water-draining capacity of the front tire comprises:

providing the central zone of the tread band of the front tire with a width greater than or equal to about 10% and less than or equal to about 35% of an axial development of the tread band of the front tire; and

providing the central zone of the tread band of the front tire with a sea/land ratio greater than or equal to about 15% and less than or equal to about 30%.

68. (new) The method of claim 65, wherein enhancing water-draining capacity of the front tire comprises:

providing at least one circumferential groove extending at the equatorial plane of the front tire.

69. (new) The method of claim 68, wherein at least some of the transverse grooves are connected to the at least one circumferential groove.

70. (new) The method of claim 65, further comprising:

providing the tread band of the front tire with a plurality of transverse grooves;
wherein in axially opposite intermediate side zones lying between the central zone and axially opposite shoulder zones, the transverse grooves of the tread band of the front tire define a sea/land ratio greater than or equal to about 15% and less than or equal to about 35%, and
wherein each of the intermediate side zones has a width greater than or equal to about 15% and less than or equal to about 35% of an axial development of the tread band of the front tire.

71. (new) The method of claim 70, wherein the transverse grooves in the tread band of the front tire define, with a running direction of the front tire, a first angle greater than or equal to about 30° and less than or equal to about 60°.

72. (new) The method of claim 65, further comprising:
enhancing water-draining capacity of the rear tire by providing the tread band of the rear tire with a plurality of transverse grooves;
wherein the transverse grooves alternately extend from the central zone of the tread band of the rear tire toward axially opposite shoulder zones of the tread band of the rear tire, and
wherein the axially opposite shoulder zones of the tread band of the rear tire are axial external to the central zone of the tread band of the rear tire.

73. (new) The method of claim 72, wherein in axially opposite intermediate side zones lying between the central zone and the shoulder zones, the transverse grooves of the tread band

of the rear tire define a sea/land ratio greater than or equal to about 10% and less than or equal to about 30%, and

wherein each of the intermediate side zones has a width greater than or equal to about 15% and less than or equal to about 35% of an axial development of the tread band of the rear tire.

74. (new) The method of claim 72, wherein the transverse grooves in the tread band of the rear tire define, with a running direction of the rear tire, a second angle greater than or equal to about 30° and less than or equal to about 60°.